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SIPDIS

FOR AF/S

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [LT](#)

SUBJECT: GOVERNMENT INVESTIGATES ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT, SEVERAL
SUSPECTS IN CUSTODY

REF: MASERU 109

¶1. Following yesterday's attempted assassination of Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili (reftel), the local situation is calm and quiet, with the city conducting business as usual. The Prime Minister is attending a sod-turning at a bridge construction site today in Qacha's Nek, in the far eastern part of the country. There were rumors that the police would impose a dusk-to-dawn curfew, but those rumors were unfounded. The search for the fleeing attackers continued along the border with South Africa, to the north of Maseru, until nightfall.

¶2. Ambassador Nolan attended a briefing for heads of diplomatic missions yesterday, hosted by Acting Foreign Minister Sekatle; the information he received there is all available from local press sources, as well. Press reports indicate that between 15 and 30 individuals may have been involved in the attack. According to the press and the GOL, 4 individuals were killed in the military response to the attack and the subsequent search for the attackers; 2 individuals were apprehended in South Africa when they presented themselves at a medical clinic for treatment; and an additional 5 individuals are in police custody. Both press and GOL sources indicate that there are a Mozambican and a South African among the detainees, with the press claiming that the attackers were mercenaries. There is no indication that the military command was involved in this attack. Press reported that a soldier from the Lesotho Defense Forces (LDF) was one of the casualties, and the GOL has stated that 5 LDF soldiers were taken hostage at the military barracks and forced by the attackers to participate, while they were stealing the military vehicles and weapons used in the attack.

¶3. Post will report septel on possible motives for this assassination attempt.

NOLAN